

April 30, 2010

Los Alamos National Laboratory is Home to Groundbreaking Modeling Technology

Washington, DC – Today, Rep. Ben Ray Luján sent a letter to Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano, urging her to use modeling programs at Los Alamos National Laboratory that can track and model the effects of an oil spill. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) maintains the National Infrastructure Simulation and Analysis Center (NISAC) at both Los Alamos and Sandia National Laboratories. NISAC's capability to model the effects of an oil spill on the nation's many interconnected infrastructure networks has been called upon in the past.

“As you are aware, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) maintains the National Infrastructure Simulation and Analysis Center (NISAC) at both Los Alamos and Sandia National Laboratories. NISAC has the capability to model the effects of an oil spill of this magnitude on the nation's many interconnected infrastructure networks--and has done so in the past. As I have discussed with you in the past, NISAC has been used by federal decision makers to model the spread of a global avian influenza pandemic, but has also analyzed natural disasters including hurricanes in the Gulf Coast region now being affected by the oil slick. Given that the current slick has now begun to reach the shore, I strongly urge the Department to activate NISAC and begin the process of forecasting its effects. While we do not want to cause unnecessary alarm, it is of great importance that our country is prepared for various contingencies.”

For more information on Los Alamos National Laboratory's supercomputer modeling program, visit LANL's [web site](#) .

FULL TEXT OF LETTER

April 30, 2010

*Hon. Janet Napolitano
Secretary of Homeland Security
U.S. Naval Security Station
3801 Nebraska Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20393*

Dear Secretary Napolitano:

I have been closely monitoring the spread of the oil slick off the coast of Louisiana since the explosion of the Deepwater Horizon rig last week. As you mentioned in your remarks earlier today, this spill is truly one of national significance. Environmental damage to our country's Gulf Coast can have far-reaching effects for the biodiversity, food supply, economy, and transportation network of the entire nation.

As you are aware, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) maintains the National Infrastructure Simulation and Analysis Center (NISAC) at both Los Alamos and Sandia National Laboratories. NISAC has the capability to model the effects of an oil spill of this magnitude upon the nation's many interconnected infrastructure networks--and has done so in the past. As I have discussed with you in the past, NISAC has been used by federal decision makers to model the spread of a global avian influenza pandemic, but has also analyzed natural disasters including hurricanes in the Gulf Coast region that is now being affected by the oil slick. Given that the current slick has now begun to reach the shore, I strongly urge the Department to activate NISAC and begin the process of forecasting its effects. While we do not want to cause unnecessary alarm, it is of great importance that our country is prepared for various contingencies.

Thus far, I know the Department has been very engaged in addressing the effects of this spill. The catastrophic damage that the spill could cause—including the potential destruction of important fisheries or blocking of the Mississippi River's vital shipping lanes—merits bringing all of our available tools to bear on containing it.

Thank you for attention to this matter and please do not hesitate to contact me directly if I can be of any assistance.

Respectfully submitted,

Ben Ray Luján

Member of Congress